

Testimony of Craig P. Coy
Chief Executive Officer, Massachusetts Port Authority
To the Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation
July 25, 2002

Chairman Hollings and members of the Committee.

For the record my name is Craig P. Coy, Chief Executive Officer of the Massachusetts Port Authority, owner and operator of Boston's Logan International Airport.

The Transportation and Aviation Security Act which you passed last November represents an extraordinary commitment by this nation to the safety and security of everyone who travels.

In its scope and urgency, this new act – with its historic mandate to screen every piece of baggage that goes on a commercial airliner -- belongs with those other celebrated actions America has taken in our past when foreign attacks have forced this nation to mobilize quickly for war.

As the new head of Massport and Logan Airport, I took this new mandate for 100 percent baggage screening as a rallying cry. It represents a stretch goal around which all of our employees and the citizens of Boston can identify and point to achieving with pride. Every airport is unique, with its own set of circumstances. The Massport Board of Directors and I believed in no uncertain terms that we would lead the way.

Since coming to the Massachusetts Port Authority about three months ago my top priority has been to make sure we are doing everything we can to work with the TSA to encourage them to meet all their mandates – including the 100 percent baggage screening program.

My analogy is that TSA was handed the ball on baggage screening. They've pitched the ball to us and we've hit a long shot to centerfield. We're running hard to first base. It's a long way to home plate and we're not yet sure we'll get there to score the winning run. However, there is one thing I know: in sports, in life, or in public policy, we will never succeed unless we try.

This security precaution is long overdue, and designing and building a system to screen more than a billion pieces of luggage that fly domestically every year is an enormous challenge for this nation.

I knew Logan would never have a chance to make this deadline unless we committed 100 percent to the effort. We put our best people on the project and hired the very best consultants from around the world – the same consultants, in fact, as those hired by the TSA.

Because of the role that Logan played on the attacks on September 11 Massport has been very aggressive about this project. So, rather than back away from this challenge, we asked the

TSA to accelerate our plans instead.

We were professional and polite -- but persistent. We worked closely with the TSA, early and often -- maybe earlier and more often than they really appreciated. We called them on cell phones and at home.

We made numerous trips to Washington to present our plan. When there wasn't a conference room available, we rented one in a nearby hotel.

And on June 14, Logan became the first major airport in the country to receive federal approval for a hold baggage screening plan.

I can't say enough about the help that we received from Senator Kerry, Senator Kennedy, and the entire Massachusetts Congressional Delegation in moving this project forward. I also want to say, that the cooperation Massport has received from the TSA, in our joint efforts to make sure Logan meets this important deadline, has been outstanding.

George Naccara, the TSA security director for Logan, is on board and our staffs could not be working more closely together. Last week, we met together with two Massachusetts firms that manufacture screening equipment to impress upon them the urgency of stepping up production. As local Massachusetts companies, we are glad to have them as part of our team, and they have assured us they are fully committed to making Logan's effort a success.

Once we got the go-ahead from the TSA, we have pulled out all the stops to have an inline Hold Baggage Screening system at all our active terminals by December 31.

Because of Logan's severe land constraints, high passenger volume, and the advanced age of our facilities, it is arguably more difficult to build these screening facilities at Logan than at any other airport in the country.

What helped immensely was the comprehensive, complex computer model we used at the outset of the project that allowed us to see how different baggage screening systems would interact with the rest of the airport.

Right from the start we were able to rule out an interim, lobby solution because our computer models showed us we simply didn't have the room. We have also been able to design our facilities so they are flexible enough to accommodate new systems as they evolve. During peak times, Logan handles up to 5,000 pieces of luggage an hour. As designed, the inline bag screening system will accommodate both present and future capacity without delays at the check-in lines.

On July 11, just three weeks after getting TSA approved, Massport broke ground on a project

that includes the renovation of approximately eleven bag rooms, major building additions at approximately seven locations, and the construction of five new substations to handle the electrical load.

Accelerated construction like this, at an airport like ours, must be choreographed to perfection. To get the work done we are busing workers to secure areas, prefabricating sections offsite, pre-purchasing materials, and performing other amazing feats of engineering magic.

My motto has always been, every person counts, every act counts. But on this project the motto is: every minute counts, because we have none to spare. For the most part we will be running double shifts six days a week, and at times working around the clock all week-long.

Another important benefit was the waiver we received from the state from certain public procurement laws, which was supported from the Governor on down. It pared the normal two to three month bidding process down to just ten days. And we are still doing competitive bids.

Contractors bring a signed copy of our proposed contract to the bid opening, and if they are the low bidder, our construction manager signs the contract right on the spot so they can start that day. In public construction, this is unheard of.

Being first is a double edge sword. There are no rules to slow us down, which is a good thing. But neither are there guidelines to help steer the way. And the schedule for completing this monumental task leaves no room for error. Over the next five months Massport will remain vigilant and focused because any slippage in the project can push the completion date beyond the new year.

Progress on hold baggage screening is just one of a number of security firsts for Massport. Again, because a group of evil men stole two airplanes from Logan Airport on September 11 with 177 innocent people on board, Massport feels a special obligation to be a national leader for airport security, as well as port security at our maritime facilities.

For the past several months, we have been working with the TSA as one of 15 airports helping to establish security procedures and protocols for all 439 commercial airports in this country.

Logan has also volunteered as a test site for the development of promising new security technologies, including a first-in-the-nation facial recognition program, hand-held wireless devices that let security personnel access the National Crime Information Center while walking the beat, as well as technology that can detect fake passports or other bogus identification.

Massport is aggressively pursuing these programs along with 100 percent hold baggage screening. We are committed to providing our passengers with the best possible security, as quickly as possible. We have opened our wallet and spent a lot of money to do the job right and do it fast. Six days after getting TSA approval for the baggage screening plan, and with no

written guarantee of federal reimbursement, Massport committed \$100 million to complete the project.

But I do not want to understate the enormous financial strain that this unfunded federal mandate puts on Massport, and all airports, seriously impacted by the attacks on September 11. We will continue to seek financial support for these federal mandates, but are prepared to act now.

Already, September 11 has forced Massport to cut \$51 million from our programs, lay-off 15 percent of our workforce, and, in the midst of our most aggressive building program in history, delay more than 37 percent of our capital projects.

Nevertheless, we believe strongly in the promises made by this nation to the flying public when you passed, and the President signed, the Transportation and Aviation Security Act, We also fully support the new federal mandate to inspect every piece of luggage that flies out of our airport.

Massport has stepped forward and done its part to help the federal government meet this mandate. Critically important to the continued success of this historic effort to protect the safety and security of the people who use America's airports is the assurance, which all airports need, that the federal government's commitment remains just as strong.

Thank you and I will be happy to take questions.